

Tapes: 010 (2nd tape of interview is missing)

Interview with Robert F. Burford

Conducted Hans Stuart and Jim Muhn

November 13, 1987

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INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT F. BURFORD

Former Director, Bureau of Land Management

November 13, 1987

Present at the interview were Hans Stuart, Jim Muhn, and Robert Moore of the BLM Service Center. The recording begins with an introductory statement, then to Mr. Burford discussing the BLM history project.

TAPE ONE SIDE A

HANS STUART: This is an interview with Robert Burford, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management on November 13, 1987. Interviewing Mr. Burford are Jim Muhn, a Historian with the BLM Service Center, and Hans Stuart, a writer with the BLM Service Center.

MR. BURFORD: ... it will probably be the last time we can get contact with everybody who has served in this particular job, and certainly some of us are getting older and time will take its toll. More people will be appointed to hold the job; I think this will be useful in the future not only to new employees but some of the employees now ... because they're a little isolated in various portions of the Bureau and because the Bureau is so much larger than it was when it was formed that they really don't have a chance to get an understanding of the evolution of the General Land Office and Grazing Service and then the minerals activities, and as various laws came along adding wild and scenic rivers and historic preservation, which gave us archaeologists and recreation specialists, multiple use managers. We need to fit their particular discipline into the concept of multiple use and it seems to me that it's very natural for each one of those disciplines that are represented, wildlife biologist or archaeologist, to have a narrow focus on their particular objectives and sometimes fail to remember that if they'll read FLPMA, it directs the Bureau to manage the lands for the greatest good for the greatest number of people ... that we are mandated to not only have wilderness areas but we're also mandated to have some oil fields and make sure that mining is done in an environmentally sound and responsible manner ... that

grazing, both of wildlife, wild horses, and domestic livestock is conducted in a way that takes into account its effect on rangeland resources, that timbering needs to take into consideration some of the things that happened on steep slopes or areas close to anadromous fishery habitat, threatened and endangered species, both plant and animal, and that some of these mandates are almost diametrically opposed to each other and it's the manager's job to sit out there and consider the information he has and arrive at the best decision he can. You never now and never will achieve, in my view, achieve the ability to write a formula that will allow him to stick some numbers into a formula and come out with a decision that's correct. It's a matter of judgment, and to date the best computers we have do not have the capability of making human judgments. They can compile data, they can sort data, they can put it on maps, and they can show where conflicts are, but the only way you'll get decisions on such things such as is what should be a wilderness study area, what should be recommended for a wilderness area, what should be where grazing should be restricted ... is going to be in the judgment of that manager. It was much easier, the decisions were much easier, back in the days of the Grazing Service because that [the Taylor Grazing Act] was one of the first laws that looked at conservation of range and started a conservation ethic, if you will. I don't mean to imply that there wasn't a conservation ethic in the forerunners of the Bureau before that, but actually that was the first time we started managing the public lands in a responsible manner. And from that start, and the combination of GLO and the Grazing Service evolved the modern Bureau of Land Management. It is not completely evolved yet, but I think that history will show that we're fairly close to the type of management agency we will end up with several years from now ... Some uses will rise, and some will fall, and budget emphasis will shift from one area to another, but ... the programs we have today will probably be the ones we have several years from now. We saw a lot of environmental enthusiasm of law makers in the '60s and '70s and there may be some modifications in some of those laws, but I think most of them necessary to protect the environment are in place. We'll see some emphasis in different States on underground water for some reason or another, instream flow maybe in some States that they don't recognize it today. More emphasis on recreation in the future, but I think it's probably been a very exciting last 10 or 15 years in the evolution of this agency.

MUHN: Why don't we step back a little bit and find out a little about yourself. You're a native Coloradan, I assume. Did your parents homestead in Colorado, start ranching there?

BURFORD: My grandparents and my parents homesteaded there. I'm the third generation ... a native of the western slope of Colorado, which up until the 1860s was practically all Ute Indian Reservation and then they opened it up to homesteading and pushed the Indians out to various reservations that they occupy today. My grandfather BURFORD came back into Colorado from California; the rest of the family came in covered wagons earlier than that from Kentucky and Kansas. I attended school in Fruita, Colorado, and graduated from the Colorado School of Mines and worked for Permanente Aluminum Company, which is now Kaiser Aluminum.

MUHN: Were you a Geologist?

BURFORD: Mining Engineer. And then went back to ranching and ranched there in Eagle and Mesa County and then eastern Utah.

STUART: Was the ranching on your parents' homestead or grandparents?

BURFORD: No. They had sold; my grandfather still had ranching interest there, but he sold then to people outside the family and my father had sold his homestead. My grandfather sold his Homestead on Pinon Mesa before the depression and my father later sold his homestead in the "Look Look" Mountains in the early '30s and bought some land in Eagle County where we spent the summers and spent the winters in Mesa County.

STUART: I'm curious what your feelings were about ranching, is it something you wanted to go into as a boy or decide ... how did you make a decision?

BURFORD: I always enjoyed ranching, but the reason I sold out in Eagle County is that I thought there were too many people up there ... to continue a ranching operation, so I sold the ranch up there and bought one in the Pinon Mesa area where one of my grandfathers and one of my great uncles had homesteaded ... but I did not acquire the particular pieces of land that they had patented. I bought about 10,000 acres in that area. None of it had been owned by my family prior to the time I bought it. I have had contact with government agencies, both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, both as a child and through with my ranching career, and got into politics after I became less active in ranching and got talked into running for the State Legislature and served three terms there. The last term was served as Speaker of the House of Representatives of Colorado, and then decided six years was enough in that job but I've had this job longer than any other outside job I've ever had. I worked longer for the Federal Government than I ever worked for anybody except for myself.

STUART: How long did you work for yourself before you started into this?

BURFORD: Well, I came back here in '81, then I've been ranching up until the time I came back here.

STUART: From the time you left school?

BURFORD: No ... I worked for Permanente for a while; in about 1950 I went back to ranching and worked in it until 1980. Thirty years, that's ...

STUART: Most people's careers are 30 years.

BURFORD: Yeah. I've had two or three careers, though. It's been an interesting experience having viewed the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service from the perspective of the permittee and then viewing them from the perspective of sitting

behind this desk ... and up until recently having made some decisions on grazing matters, did not realize when I came into this multiplicity of uses and great number of laws that affected decisions you make in here ... Of course, I no longer have any permits (neither BLM or Forest Service) myself, but then I am "recused" from grazing decisions now under a new ruling of the Justice Department. I've signed a recusal, so grazing matters go around me, but that still leaves plenty to do.

STUART: That kind of leads to one of our questions: we were wondering what you felt about BLM and public lands before you became Director, and if your ideas on that have changed, and if you can go over that a little.

BURFORD: Not a great deal, although I'm generally credited or discredited, as the case might be, with being a member of the Sagebrush Rebellion, which started probably in New Mexico or Nevada. Both those States urged the privatization or turning over to the State of all the public lands. In Colorado we didn't do that; we did say that it was something that should be studied, and we recognized that there were more Federal lands, and anyway, anyone who looks at the map knows that Nevada has a problem ... and there've been various attempts to address it. Only about 13 percent of the State is privately held. Drastic expanses of public lands which would've been ... probably if the ability to homestead had been such that if a rancher had been able to carve out an economic unit in those desert areas that ... But they were not able to the homestead laws limiting you to 640 acres ... on some parts of the West can only support one cow, which is not feasible for a family unit. But ... within I would say 16 to 18 years after the livestock grazing Homestead Act was passed in the last form it was in ... it was suspended in 1932. Entries were suspended because there was the beginning of a movement to keep some of the public domain in the hands of the public. There of course had been various attempts on the part of some ranchers to get Congress to sell a lot of the public lands in the West, which would've amounted to a livestock industry at that time. My family in general was not in favor of that because, I could remember my father saying that would put the small operator out of business. He said that before 25 years was up, if they did sell, the small operators would be forced out. He considered himself not too large of an operator.

I can remember the time the Taylor Grazing Act was passed: I shook hands with Ed Taylor once or twice about the time it was passed and before he died. Of course, I was well acquainted with Wayne Aspinall, who headed up the Public Land Law Review Commission -- is that the correct title of it? -- out of which came, well eventually, FLPMA ... although it was about 14 years ... The Public Land Law Review Commission started in about 1962, didn't it? Yeah, Aspinall was one of the ones who pushed it and he was chairman of House Interior at the time the report was submitted. Some people from the Bureau worked on that commission, as well as some members of his committee staff. Some of them were still around here when I came in as Director. Charlie Conklin was still working on the Interior committee, and he had served on that. Another attorney in Utah, I can't remember his name, did a lot of work on this, on the Public Land Law Review Commission. Eleanor Schwartz's husband worked on this ...

BOB MOORE: Milton Pearl.

BURFORD: Milton Pearl, yeah. I remember attending some of their hearings on that as well as some of the first meetings of the Taylor Grazing Board's first meetings accompanying my father but not participating because I was fairly young at that time. But he was taking an active part in it and served, I don't know how many years he served on that grazing board in Grand Junction. It was about the time of the formation of it and from then until he decided he was too old and resigned. He refused to run again. Now, what else do you need?

MUHN: Did you yourself ever serve on the Grazing Board?

BURFORD: Yes. Once.

MUHN: Why you as Director?

BURFORD: Why me as Director?

MUHN: Right. I mean why do you feel they selected you, chose you out of the ranks of various people they could have chosen?

BURFORD: Oh ... Jim Watt and I worked together on some things back in Colorado, some legislative initiatives, and he knew that I was a conservative Republican; and when he started putting Bureau heads together, I had told him if he wanted that I would consider coming back to Washington, if he had some spot he wanted me to occupy. He called and asked if I wanted to be head of the Bureau. I would say because I worked for Reagan in the election and because I was acquainted with Jim Watt. Some people in Colorado had been pushing me to make a big run for Secretary of Interior, and when Watt was selected, I called him and congratulated him. Two or three days later he called and wanted to know if I'd consider taking an appointment. He knew I had had some experience from the other side of the fence with the Bureau of Land Management and also knew I had political experience and wanted to find somebody to take the job, I guess.

STUART: That question about the Sagebrush Rebellion and you'd gone back to the days of the Taylor Grazing Act and then we kind of mentioned Wayne Aspinall and the Public Land Law Review Commission ... was there a connection between what Aspinall was doing and what the ranchers felt in the Sagebrush Rebellion? Was there a tie there between ...?

BURFORD: Well, there were ... As is any law, FLPMA, which eventually evolved out of the Public Land Law Review Commission, if you look at it, repealed a lot of land laws that had been in existence over the years, including several homestead laws and the Classification and Multiple Use Act, and said that the Department of Interior had to review all land withdrawals that were in existence, and then for the first time reaffirmed multiple use on the public lands. The Classification and Multiple Use Act, which I haven't read for a helluva long time that's my first memory of any, that Congress ever set forth a multiple use concept for the Public Lands. FLPMA passed the same time the organic act for the Forest Service ... but it was

more multiple use oriented than the Forest Management and Protection Act or Forest Management Act.

MUHN: Forest Management Act, I think.

BURFORD: You'll have to look up the correct name of that law.

TAPE ONE SIDE B

BURFORD: Yeah, they passed about the same time but one reason that I think Forest Service has had more trouble with oil and gas leasing and mineral development on forest lands than the Bureau had is there is no reference to minerals in their planning act. They have since put planning into their regulations, but it's not in the law. It is mentioned in FLPMA, but it's not mentioned in the National Forest Act. Since then, they've put that into regulations that they'll consider minerals as a part of their planning process, but it has led to, I think it has led to, some of the lawsuits that the Forest Service has lost on planning and oil and gas development and planning. I think they're correcting those imbalances in the plans at the present time, and we'll hopefully get enough legal precedent that they don't get sued. We get sued every time. On minerals we get sued the same time they do, because of the fact that we handle all the minerals work for the forests.

STUART: It's often led to court mandated public land management, that was one of the questions we wanted to ask you. What do you think about this?

BURFORD: Well, I'm naturally not very much in favor of court mandated land management and I would quote the (you can look up the quotation of the judge in Reno on the Reno EIS) that he did not think he wanted to be appointed land use arbiter for the grazing throughout the State of Nevada. He thought that was an agency ... I can't give you an exact quote, but it's in that brief and you can find it ... but that was an agency function. That was a suit brought against BLM by NRDC, I think.

STUART: Was he the judge who decided on that, what is it, district by district or resource by resource area?

BURFORD: No, that was ...

MOORE: That was Bratton, wasn't it?

BURFORD: No.

MOORE: That was coal then.

BURFORD: Bratton was coal. No, that suit was NRDC vs. ... I don't remember the name of the district court judge who stated that a programmatic EIS was not sufficient, and that the Bureau would have to write an EIS area by area. Which meant that we'd have to write 132 ... That case was not appealed and carried to appeals court, which I personally feel it should have been carried to appeals court, that it was not a correct decision. Programmatic EISs have held up in other cases before and I think that the judge was wrong. But then, the appeals court might not have agreed with ... I'm not an attorney, so my interpretation of it may have been incorrect; but the Bureau, when that decision was arrived at, reached an agreement with NRDC that they would do all those grazing EISs, and we have spent I don't know how much money. An inordinate amount of money in that process, but we've also learned. It also served a purpose I think, teaching the Bureau how to write environmental impact statements and how to get them done for a lot less money than the first one or two cost. If I remember correctly, the first one was in Idaho. What was it ...?

MOORE: Challis, Idaho was the first one, but it wasn't the first one filed.

BURFORD: It wasn't the first one filed, but was the first one started.

MOORE: Yeah.

BURFORD: And probably cost a hell of a lot more than ... well we could've written 20 of them today for what, I think that first one cost. You really can't find out what it really did cost, but it cost a lot of money. It was one of the contributing factors to the Sagebrush Rebellion, I feel pretty sure. But anyway ...

STUART: What was the concern of the Sagebrush rebels?

BURFORD: Oh, I think that for forth, in effect, making grazing decisions in a one-year period of time instead of making them over a number, instead of watching condition and trend, they took some range surveys at one period of time and then made what I would consider to be arbitrary decisions that the carrying capacity was this and such and put it into effect immediately. I have since tried to, in general, tried to look at trend on ranges and have asked the Bureau to look it that way, to see whether conditions are going up or down or static and by monitoring. We'll find out sometime after I leave, I guess, how successful I've been. Because I'm sure we'll get sued on something about that in the future. I don't know whether we need to put that in the history or not! That's a prediction, but it's not history yet.

MUHN: A lot of this probably won't make its way there, but it gives us a feeling and ...

BURFORD: Yeah, it's been mainly background that I've been trying to get in there. I suppose everyone else who sits behind this desk, I've had my own ideas about how the organization should be set up. One of the things I did was elevate energy and minerals to a co-equal spot with the renewables, land and renewables, and then the other functions of this organization [?]. We're in another part; we now have split those and made changes and have four associate directors in here and one deputy director. I've tried to move some personnel around, in that

there seemed to be a tendency in the Bureau, and Bob [Moore] or some of the other State Directors that have been around for a long time can tell you whether it's true or not, but my perception was that when the people put in a certain length of time in Washington D.C. and then they wanted to go out in the field either as Associates or State Directors or District Managers or something, and they did not in general want to come back for another hitch in Washington after they've been a State Director; it was in general looked upon as kind of a spot where you finished your career. I have tried to make some changes in that I don't think I changed the attitude and again you can talk to the State Directors on that ... I've brought some State Directors back in the organization because I really think you need to keep that new field experience back here to make sure that personnel who formulate regulations and formulate policy, one thing or another, have had fairly recent field experience so they'll know how that policy will affect the day-to-day nuts and bolts operations that State Directors, District Managers, and Area Managers have to implement. There are still people in Washington who have never served in the field. Then maybe there are reasons that they haven't, and there'll be people who will have served in Washington after I leave that have never been in the field, but I'd like to see a trend towards bringing more field experience in ... people with recent field experience back into these jobs back here, especially in the top the review, the core groups that really have the most say about it because I think it's very valuable to the Bureau to have someone who's been out there making those on the ground decisions come back and give advice to whoever sits in the Director's chair, and whoever sits upstairs in the Assistant Secretary's office. I think it necessary to do that, that and I think we have a great chance right now at getting a good start on ALMRS, GIS, Land Information System, which is going to be one thing that has the huge impact on the Bureau's ability to carry out its mission.

I recognize that this effort has been made before ... that and office automation, land records systems ... I'd hope that it's enough ingrained by the time I leave here that its own momentum will carry it through ... Whether it's the next administration or whether it's the next iteration of computers or whatever it is, I hope that we will get it ... get a good enough start on it. And some places in the Bureau there's still resistance towards use of computers and some people I think still don't see that we do have to modernize and make the necessary effort.

It's a big chunk of money when you look at it in order to get that mass of information into a data base and have it accessible, and you have to have it accessible to the right people and you have to be able to protect it so that the world can't access it. So you have to have security on it, but it's definitely for the future. I think we have a good enough start on it that it will stay in place.

STUART: What would you say to some of the folks in the Bureau who are kind of afraid of all this new automation and feel uncomfortable with it?

BURFORD: I would say to any of them that if someone like me who grew up in the slide rule era isn't afraid of it ... although I don't claim to use it and manipulate it the way I should but I'm not afraid of it ... I think all the managers out there that are younger than I am and ... of course the ones that are 30 or 35 are not afraid of it. And they're the ones who'll be able to put it to good use. Bureaucracies are always resistant to change, it's the very nature of the beast that they want to continue to do things the way they did things before. If you don't change, you're generally not at risk and if you make some changes and if you don't get them on line right, you are at risk. Bureau of Mines found that out in their pay system once. They changed their pay system and lost all their records on pay. So ... it's not without risk to make some of these kinds of changes and modernization, but I think there is getting to be a general acceptance that the Bureau will go that way and I think people are starting to realize that we have to go that way. Because we just have so much data today that needs to be considered and can't be considered in any other way other than computers. And if anyone is worrying about storage space that is not going to be a problem because miniaturization and the fact that you can have a computer the size of that recorder there today that can hold everything the first computer the Bureau had still has, I guess.

MOORE: Not quite.

BURFORD: Well damn near! The fact that you can stick it in one of these desk top ones, everything that was collected over 10 years, if you've got the time to get it in or can figure out a way to off load from where it is ... So the problem is getting and making sure the data is right and then that you understand how to manipulate it, those are the problems. The storage of it is not going to be a problem, because you just run it off on a disk or whatever it is you do with it; stick it on a shelf and one of these will hold what the U.S. Archives has got in it today. Won't it? Don't make me out to be a liar.

STUART: What would you say to ranchers who are wondering about all of this automation? You were talking about formulas, you know, you can never have a formula that'll make decisions and I don't know people might think maybe that you're having a machine that has a formula ...

BURFORD: Black box, cookbook ...

STUART: Uh huh.

BURFORD: Well, I can tell you what I'd say to them ... they should keep abreast to some of the technology themselves; a lot of the younger generation is conversant with computers and can understand their uses. There are things happening out there that they need to keep up with. If they can establish a working relationship - cooperation and coordination - information sharing is a two-way street. You'll always have personality conflicts between any user and any agency that has a regulatory function as well as a management function you never overcome entirely that ... There will always be a little distrust, I imagine, between users and you don't limit it to ranchers - you can go to recreation groups, you can go to environmental groups, you can go to drafters, people who get permits for river runners. They want to be boss, and they think their use is always the most important that the public lands have. You can pick out anybody, the consortium for turtles, they think the only use that should be out there is the desert tortoise. The ranchers using the same ground think the only use that should be

out there is cows. The Park Service guy that's sitting next to both of them thinks that neither one of them should be out there; he thinks a barrier out there 20 miles around his park so nobody can get that close to it or have any effect on it. Those kinds of conflicts will be there forever. The only thing is, they seem to keep intensifying for some reason. But you don't solve all of those, you try to make decisions. People that are out there in the decision-making spots are trying to make decisions that count. I keep emphasizing, I keep bringing it up, is multiple use. That's what we take into account. The reason I guess I emphasize it so much is that I don't want to see the Bureau get to be a single use organization like the Park Service is or U.S. Fish & Wildlife is. You'd think the Deity struck them with a bolt that said "Thou shalt do this on the land, and nothing else." I think somebody has to keep emphasizing it or we'll get to either being only recreation or being only commercial use; economic uses, extractive uses, we shouldn't be either one. It sounds like I'm saying we should be all things to all people, which is not exactly the way I mean it; we should be an abider out there, because the public lands indeed belong to all the public.

MUHN: While we're on this subject, and realizing your time is valuable, I guess we should kind of skip down real quick to sort of lumping three questions together and that is, during your 10 years, what do you think the most important issues have been? What do you feel your accomplishments have been? And what do you think your legacy to the agency going to be? Can you roll all those into one?

BURFORD: Well, I think one thing we managed to do, the people that were here in Washington and myself, which I think was fairly important was getting responsibilities of the down hole oil and gas regulation moved over into the Bureau so that we had the responsibility for both subsurface and surface regulation. In other words, the movement of the Conservation Division onshore into the Bureau I think was a good stroke for the land, a good stroke for government. And it did not make much sense, that the Bureau of Land Management was environmentally responsible for the surface of the land but not environmentally responsible for the subsurface. Split estate is one of the biggest problems that faces any land manager the fact that one

entity owns subsurface, and one owns the surface, and that's an automatic conflict. So, I think that the fact that we were able to convince Jim Watt that that movement, and Bill Clark, that those two pieces should be melded together was an organizational coup, if you will. But I think most of the people in the Bureau would agree that people in the Conservation Division did not particularly like it at that time, but I think that any manager or any student of government would look upon that as the correct decision. I think that getting ALMRS started and making an attempt to get started digitizing land records in the Eastern States Office is not there yet, but we're taking some important steps in that direction. I personally feel, and from talking to you, academia, grazing and monitoring, and systems looking at prioritization of where you put expenditures on grazing lands will eventually be moved in the right direction.

TAPE TWO SIDE A

MUHN: We've got ALMRS and EIS and the minerals consolidation ... anything else? You've already touched upon some things you think you've done, for instance, like getting more people from the field back here and mixing the State Directors a bit.

STUART: If you could list things, is that your list?

BURFORD: I can give you one of my favorites, and that's the solution of wild horse problems. It's a problem there that I'm not sure is soluble under the present law. It's certainly not soluble in an economic manner under present law. I'm not sure but what I may have compounded it instead of solving it. I made several attempts at solving it but haven't gotten it done yet. I think we have in the field of planning, environmental impact statements; I think these things should be looked upon at things that the Bureau did during the time I was here, not as things that I did. I can't stand up there and take credit for these things. Some of these things were ideas that Bureau people have had for several years, but we managed to get them done during the time that I was here. Now, the Bureau's accomplishments during this period of time: I think they've come a long way in writing the environmental impact statements and land plans, and all I did is tell some of the planning people back here that it

looked to me like when you went in and started a land plan that by the time you got through with land plan your EIS should just flow out of it. And that they need to be melded closer together. I think we've gotten some good plans out that have stood the judicial test in the cases where they've been challenged. I think our coal program, which was very contentious in 1981 and 1982, that we had worked out a lot of the problems, perceived problems because we won most of those lawsuits. We worked at it; it's been proven in court that our plans were environmentally sound. We worked out the problems within the coal program. We worked them out in time to not have any market for the coal. There's no demand for any new leases out there at the present time. But we got the expertise, which I hope we'll maintain and hope that whoever follows me can maintain it in the Bureau. So, if the nation sees a need, that we can go into coal leasing again without all the a priori we had before. Some of those things have been tested in court and found that the savings that were made here were the correct decisions. I think maybe when you get to interviewing some of the State Directors and the Associates that they can point out some of the things the Bureau has accomplished over the past few years. As I say, all these ideas all don't spring from my head, they come out in brainstorming with staff and talking to State Directors. Some of the ideas people had that haven't been able to get anybody's attention before. Then there's some other things out there that need to be done, that obviously are not going to happen during the time that I'm going to be here. When I leave here there's still going to be plenty of work for whoever comes behind me. You don't get everything done, and they're not all new problems; some will be old problems. Our withdrawal review programs can stop a lawsuit and we could lose that lawsuit and have to start all over again on some things. The courts will tell us that and someday I hope to get a decision out of them ... how long has it been? Over two years ...

MOORE: Yeah, over two years.

BURFORD: Over two years that we've been in court on that, and the judge hasn't given us any decision on that yet. I think we got a riparian policy out and minerals policy and those were things that hadn't been addressed before. I think some of the

people on the ground had done some great work on the riparian habitat. And done it in a way that's consistent with multiple use. I think our recreation program probably isn't as strong as it should be, but it will probably receive more attention in the future. There was a backlog of, I think it was 28,000 applications for permit to drill, and when I came in here and we got rid of that in less than a year. I just changed some methods of operation. If Congress will go along with us and get a bill passed on some amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act passed that we've suggested, I think that that program will be strengthened because it will eliminate the necessity of identifying KGSSs and let the market work ... let people bid as much money as they think the land is worth instead of having us try to make a determination of what it's worth when, without having to drill the hole, the operator is the one who is going to sink his money in that hole in the ground. So, he should decide how much he wants to pay for that lease. I think that will probably be a benefit to the Treasury. We can then concentrate on the drainage program, which needs to be concentrated on, I think. In the coal area, in coal leases, we've done some investigating and found out some places weren't doing what we were told to do in the Coal Lease Amendment Acts and we're not increasing the royalties at the time we should, and of course we couldn't make a change after the date had passed, so the Federal Government lost some money on that. But we changed that. We found it out ourselves and changed it before GAO or anybody found out that we were behind in that. We got a system in place now where we can track it. I think the Bureau has done a lot of good things. You can go to all the critics and they can tell you of all the mistakes I've made. I've got a lawsuit for every one of them.

MUHN: It's always easier to be a critic and not a doer.

BURFORD: It's easier to criticize than it is to stick your neck out. But it's been fun. At least I've enjoyed most of it. I don't like some of the publicity I've got and some of the letters that are written - the comments made about some of my wild horse policy for one thing - but if you're going to sit in one of these jobs, you're going to get criticism. No matter, it's the kind of job you'll eventually make everybody mad at least once. They'll never remember the things you do right for

them, they only remember the mistake you made, the mistakes in their eyes.

STUART: That might prove we're a multiple use agency.

BURFORD: Yeah, that's a truism. Every manager that works out there on the ground figures he's going to get criticized. And every politician that works in Congress. Some people are not going to agree with you - you've got to screw your saddle down and take off ...

STUART: We sure appreciate your time.

BURFORD: That's OK. I won't charge you for it. No, I'll charge you what it's worth!

MUHN: It was good to hear what you think about the issues, we're just peons in the great mass of the Bureau.

BURFORD: We're all just one little cog in a big wheel, and the cogs are all equal. Sure, I'm sitting at the top of the organization, but I couldn't function without the staff in Washington, I couldn't function without the staff out there in Wendover, Utah, or wherever. Everybody has an important function. And it will go on after you and I both are gone. The sun'll come up tomorrow, and the snow will somewhere land, and the grass will grow ... But I'll tell you one thing that makes a hell of a good range manager - moisture.